

The Beginnings of Democracy in 14 Countries: The Right to Vote

Country	Year	Universal suffrage in	Restrictions (discrimination based on gender and/or race)
Australia	1856-58		All male British subjects; Queensland and Western Australia excluded aborigines
	1895		South Australia extended voting rights to women
	1902		Universal suffrage for all 21+, with exceptions for indigenous people
	1962		Aborigines obtain right
Brazil	1824		Free men 25+, income restrictions
		1932	Mandatory for all 21+
		1989	Universal 16+, mandatory for 18-70; illiterates not obligated
Canada	Mid-1700s		Male property holders (colonial Canada); Catholics excluded
	1867		Male British subjects who met property qualifications; Both governing parties manipulated franchises in their favour
	1917		Female relatives of servicemen enfranchised; disqualified those who spoke "an enemy language" at home
	1918		Racial exclusions at provincial levels; First Nations members excluded
	1948		Racial restrictions lifted, with the exception of First Nations
	1960		First Nations obtain right to vote
France	1792		Men only
	1850		Criminals and the homeless excluded
	1851		All males over 21 eligible
		1944	Women over 21 obtain right
		1974	Voting age reduced to 18
Germany	1871		All male citizens 25+
		1919	All citizens 20+
	1933-45		Voting rights ended by ruling Nazis
		1945	All citizens 21+
		1970	Voting age lowered to 18
India		1951	All citizens 21+
		1989	Voting age reduced to 18
Japan		1946	Universal suffrage enshrined with post-war Constitution – no restrictions
Kenya	1920		Europeans only voted/elected
	1924		Suffrage extended to Arabs and Indians
		1961	Universal suffrage, but specified number of seats reserved for Europeans, Arabs and Indians
		1963	Restrictions lifted, although one-party rule installed in 1969
		1992	Multi-party politics re-established
Korea (Republic)		1948	Universal suffrage constitutionally enshrined
		1952	First presidential elections using popular vote

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South Africa	1910		Limited to white men; property and literacy qualifications also applied
	1930		White women eligible
	1958		Voting age for white voters reduced to 18
	1969		First election of Coloured Persons Representative Council
	1981		First election of South African Indian Council
	1984		Tri-cameral parliament established to give representation to the two above groups
	1994		All racial discrimination in voting rights abolished
Switzerland	1291		Male vote in <i>Landsgemeinde</i> established
	1848		Federal constitution establishes male suffrage for ages 20+
		1971	Women obtain the right to vote in federal elections
		1991	Voting age lowered to 18
Tunisia		1959	Post-independence constitution established universal suffrage for all citizens; Islam becomes the state religion
United Kingdom	1265		Small percentage of males eligible to vote in parliamentary elections (property holders)
	1865		Franchise extended to males who rented properties of a certain value (1 out of 7)
	1918		Men 21+ and women over 30 with property
		1928	Everyone 21+, no property restrictions
		1969	Extended to all 18+
United States	1776		White male adult property holders
	1856		Property qualifications removed for white males
	1870		All males (but Jim Crow laws suppress African-American participation)
		1920	Gender-based discrimination outlawed
		1965	Voting Rights Act asserts universal suffrage, ending racial discrimination in access
		1971	Voting age lowered to 18+